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Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences

Implementation of General Assembly resolutions 50/227 and 52/12 B

The role of the Economic and Social Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

In its resolution 2003/6, the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General to update his report on conference follow-up in the light of General Assembly resolution 57/270 B on the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits. The present report identifies the steps that have been taken to date to implement the provisions of the resolution that are relevant to the work of the Council. It also focuses on areas that need further action in order to promote coordinated implementation throughout the United Nations system. A number of recommendations are made in this regard. The present report also focuses on the Council's possible contribution to the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly in 2005.

* E/2004/100.

** The submission of the present report was delayed because inputs on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 57/270 B and Economic and Social Council resolution 2003/6 from most of the subsidiary bodies of the Council were obtained after the conclusion of their annual sessions in late April and early May 2004. Also, the report took into account General Assembly resolution A/58/291 dealing with the same subject, which was adopted in early May 2004.

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I. Background

1. In accordance with its decision 2002/309, the Economic and Social Council devoted its coordination segment of 2003 to the theme "The role of the Economic and Social Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits". The Council had before it a report of the Secretary-General on the role of the Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits, which was prepared before the conclusion of the work of the ad hoc working group of the General Assembly on the same issue. The working group submitted its recommendations to the General Assembly, which were adopted in Assembly resolution 57/270 B. By the same resolution, the Assembly also decided to include an item under the same title in the provisional agenda of its fifty-eighth session.

2. By its resolution 2003/6, the Economic and Social Council decided to take the necessary steps for the effective implementation of the provisions of Assembly resolution 57/270 B that were relevant to the work of the Council and its subsidiary machinery and to keep the implementation under review. It also requested the Secretary-General to update his above-mentioned report and recommendations in the light of resolution 57/270 B and to submit it for consideration by the Council at its next substantive session.

3. Meanwhile, the Secretary-General submitted a report outlining the overall approach and core elements for the integrated and coordinated follow-up to conferences and summits (A/58/359).

II. Introduction

4. The summits and conferences of the last decade succeeded in generating global consensus on policies and actions to advance poverty eradication and sustainable development and in giving renewed relevance to the work of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, and to its mission to guide and harmonize policies for development. These conferences and summits marked the first crucial phase in the process of bringing development issues to the forefront of the multilateral agenda.

5. In 1995, the Economic and Social Council initiated work on an integrated approach to conference follow-up by focusing on the common themes of the conferences, as a means to enhance the impact of the follow-up activities and to optimize results. By creating a new platform for convergence on principles, objectives and coordinated action, and by turning global consensus into specific goals and time-bound targets, backed by political commitment at the highest level, the Millennium Summit marked a major new turning point in this process. While the Millennium Development Goals do not encompass all conference goals and commitments, together with the United Nations Millennium Declaration (General Assembly resolution 55/2), they provide the United Nations system, Governments and other relevant stakeholders with a basic common framework for promoting mutually reinforcing actions.

6. The holding of two major conferences in 2002, the International Conference on Financing for Development (Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002) and the World

Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002), marked yet another phase in this process. The outcomes of both conferences had a major focus on the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration. The conferences reinforced the widely shared need to ensure a sharper focus on implementation, to move from principles and commitments to action, and for the intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations to commit themselves to working in a coherent and coordinated way to support conference implementation. The need was recognized for a close link between policy development at the intergovernmental level and operational work undertaken at the country level by the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions and other relevant organizations, and for the active involvement of relevant stakeholders in the implementation process.

7. The adoption of General Assembly resolution 57/270 B was an important step in providing a framework for bringing architectural coherence to the various implementation processes while maintaining the distinct identity of the follow-up processes for each of the outcomes. The resolution provides tools to better coordinate global, regional and national development activities and to link together these processes in order to optimize mutual reinforcement in the pursuit of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration.

8. Resolution 57/270 B, among other things, emphasizes the need to ensure a stronger link between policy guidance and implementation activities throughout the United Nations system. In this context, the respective governing bodies of the funds and programmes will have an important role to play in ensuring that relevant policy decisions are integrated into the programme of work of the funds and programmes. The Economic and Social Council will also have a role in the exercise of its oversight responsibilities vis-à-vis these entities as well as promoting these linkages through its own work and the work of its subsidiary bodies. The resolution contains a number of provisions that specifically relate to the work of the Council, its functional commissions and its overall role in coordination. As mandated by Council resolution 2003/6, the present report focuses on the implementation of those provisions of Assembly resolution 57/270 B that are relevant to the work of the Council and its subsidiary machinery.

III. Implementing General Assembly resolution 57/270 B

A. Promoting an integrated and coordinated approach

1. Reviewing implementation through cross-sectoral themes

9. The General Assembly has decided that the Economic and Social Council should review by means of a cross-sectoral approach the progress in the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits and their follow-up processes. To that end, in paragraph 42 of its resolution 57/270 B, the Assembly requested the Council to establish, no later than 2004, a multi-year work programme for the coordination segment of its substantive session, based on a focused and balanced list of cross-sectoral thematic issues common to the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits, including the

objectives, goals and targets of the Millennium Declaration. According to the resolution, the multi-year programme would also increase predictability in the Council's work, enabling the United Nations system and relevant stakeholders to better prepare their contributions to the deliberations.

10. In its resolution 2003/6, the Council welcomed the above-mentioned request and expressed, in this regard, its determination to finalize the list of cross-sectoral thematic issues and multi-year work programme for its coordination segment, with an aim of reaching a decision before the substantive session of 2004, and invited the Bureau to initiate informal consultations on the topic by January 2004. Informal consultations led by a Vice-President of the Council are currently under way and the result of these consultations will be reported to the Council in due course.

2. Greater thematic unity and interlinkages between segments

11. In its agreed conclusions 2002/1, the Council decided that the themes of its high-level and coordination segments should be closely related. Such linkages would not only enhance the impact of its work on the United Nations system but also link more closely policy formulation with the process of implementation. In paragraph 43 of Assembly resolution 57/270 B, it was again underlined that the themes of the high-level and coordination segments should be related with each other. Accordingly, the Council focused its 2004 high-level and coordination segments on themes related to the least developed countries. The 2004 high-level segment theme will be "Resources mobilization and enabling environment for poverty eradication in the context of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010", and one of the themes for its 2004 coordination segment will be "Coordinated and integrated United Nations system approach to promote rural development in developing countries, with due consideration to least developed countries, for poverty eradication and sustainable development".

12. To further enhance linkages between policy guidance and coordination, in 2004 the high-level and coordination segments will be held in quick succession. This is intended to facilitate the participation of high-level policy makers in the coordination segment and contribute to strengthening coherence in the processes of policy formulation and implementation.

Recommendation

13. **The Council may wish to consider giving greater thematic coherence to its substantive session by organizing all segments around various aspects of a theme or around closely related themes.**

B. Guiding functional commissions to focus on implementation

1. Update on the review by functional commissions of their working methods

14. The functional commissions have a key role in pursuing the implementation of the outcomes of the conferences and summits. Recognizing this role, the World Summit on Sustainable Development called on the Commission on Sustainable Development to place more emphasis on actions that enable implementation at all levels.

15. In response to the mandate provided by the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Commission on Sustainable Development, at its eleventh session, in 2003, took innovative steps to reform its working methods. It decided to organize its work in a series of two-year action-oriented implementation cycles and adopted a programme of work for a number of cycles in the next decade. During the first year, the Commission would review progress in implementing the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. In the second year, the Commission would take policy decisions on practical measures to overcome obstacles to implementation identified in the previous year. The Commission also decided to strengthen implementation at the regional level, particularly through the regional commissions.

16. The cycle came into operation for the first time at the Commission's twelfth session, in 2004. It was a session characterized by a number of innovations. For the first time, thematic reviews were conducted through interactive discussions, regional discussions were co-organized by the Commission secretariat and the regional commissions, partnerships fairs were held and learning centres were convened to promote exchange of experience. The outcomes of the meeting were captured in the Chairman's summary, which will provide the basis for work during the policy session (thirteenth session). The twelfth session was generally regarded as a good beginning.

17. In its resolution 57/270 B, the Assembly requested each functional commission to examine its methods of work in order to pursue better the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, recognizing that there was no need for a uniform approach since each functional commission had its own specificity, while also noting that modern methods of work could better guarantee the review of progress made in implementation at all levels, on the basis of a report with recommendations to be submitted by the Secretary-General to each functional commission and relevant subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council on their methods of work, in accordance with the provisions defined by the respective outcomes and relevant decisions taken by each body, bearing in mind the progress recently achieved in this regard by certain commissions, especially the Commission on Sustainable Development. The functional commissions and other relevant bodies of the Economic and Social Council should report to the Council no later than 2005 on the outcome of that examination.

18. The Secretary-General has prepared separate reports with recommendations for consideration by the Commission for Social Development, the Commission on the Status of Women and Statistical Commission, in which, inter alia, he encouraged the functional commissions to produce more focused outcomes on priority themes, adopt biennial programmes of work, involve the entities of the United Nations system, seek increased contributions of regional commissions in their work, strengthen linkages with other functional commissions, engage and facilitate the active participation of civil society and the private sector in their work and consider how they might wish to contribute to the "major event" in 2005[1] called for in the resolution.

19. At its forty-second session, in February 2004, the Commission for Social Development held an initial exchange of views on the report of the Secretary-General covering various aspects of its working methods and decided to continue

consideration of those issues in 2005. At the forty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, it was noted that progress had already been made in revising the Commission's methods of work and the Bureau was requested to continue considering the methods of work of the Commission before its forty-ninth session, in 2005. At its thirty-fifth session, the Statistical Commission asked its Bureau to conduct an examination of the working methods of the Commission in support of coordinated follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits and submit the outcome of that examination to the Commission at its thirty-sixth session. The Commission on Population and Development decided to consider its methods of work at its thirty-eighth session, in 2005, and requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Commission. The Commission on Human Rights considered the recommendations made by the expanded Bureau on further improving the organization of work and decided to continue review and discussion of its rules and practices at its sixty-first session. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs has been reviewing its working methods since its forty-sixth session, in November 2003, and will continue working on those issues.

20. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the Commission on Science and Technology for Development were scheduled to meet in May 2004 and were expected to discuss their working methods in pursuance of resolution 57/270 B. The United Nations Forum on Forests will undertake review of its working methods in 2005 as part of the comprehensive five-year review.

Recommendations

21. **The Council may wish to invite its functional commissions and other relevant subsidiary bodies to continue to examine their methods of work in order to better pursue the implementation of the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits with a view to submitting their reports by 2005.**

22. **The Council may wish to request the Commission on Sustainable Development to share its experience and lessons learned at the completion of its first cycle, in 2005.**

2. Improving linkages with the functional commissions on coordinated implementation and follow-up

23. The linkages between the Council and its functional commissions can be strengthened through more focused reporting by the commissions and more focused dialogue among the bureaux.

24. The nature and quality of reporting from functional commissions and other bodies to the Council needs further attention. Reports are still too long and substantive policy issues are usually submerged in process details. In turn, the Council expends a great deal of time and energy considering process issues while strategic direction and guidance should be the focus of its deliberations. Its Bureau recently issued guidelines for documentation for the Council and its subsidiary bodies. Those guidelines are drawn mostly from extant legislation in the General Assembly and the Council, and incorporate further steps to help bring to manageable proportions and give greater focus to the documents submitted to the Council by its subsidiary bodies. The commissions need to clearly identify the issues that are

critical for promoting integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to conferences.

25. The consolidated reports of the Secretary-General on the work of the functional commissions is also relevant in this regard as a vehicle for making the Council's coordinating role more effective by identifying major policy issues emerging from the work of the commissions that need a coordinated response by the United Nations system.

26. The dialogue between the Council and the functional commissions through meetings between the bureaux of the functional commissions and the Bureau of the Council as well as the participation of the chairpersons of the functional commissions in the Council's session, have also helped to improve communication between the Council and its subsidiary bodies. Future meetings could focus on strategic issues and help to further clarify the role of each body in conference follow-up.

Recommendation

27. **The Council may wish to further encourage functional commissions to adhere to the guidelines regarding their reports to the Council. In so doing, the Council may wish to decide that the commissions should identify more clearly issues that require a coordinated United Nations system-wide response, especially areas in which the Council could provide guidance to the programmes, funds and agencies.**

C. Promoting a coordinated United Nations system support to conference implementation

1. Strengthening linkages with operational activities of the United Nations system

28. A coherent approach to integrated follow-up requires that the work of the executive boards of the funds and programmes should be closely linked with the overall policy guidance of the General Assembly and the system-wide coordination by the Council in implementing this guidance. To that end, a closer link needs to be built between the Council and the executive boards of funds and programmes. In its resolution 1998/27, the Council specifically requested the executive boards and executive heads of the United Nations funds and programmes to focus their 12 reports to the Council on issues related to conference follow-up, cross-sectoral coordination and the consolidated list of issues for improved coordination of operational activities.

29. So far, reports from the United Nations funds and programmes to the Council have tended to be more informational than analytical and the role of the Council has been limited to taking note of those reports. Joint meetings of the Boards have also been held, and issues relating to their contributions to the policy dialogue with the Council and their implications for the Council's policy coordination role are addressed in a separate report before the Council.

30. In a related decision, in paragraph 13 of its resolution 57/270 B, the Assembly invited the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, in his capacity as the chair of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), to present on a regular basis to the Council at is coordination segment the activities carried out

by UNDG related to the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of the conferences. UNDG will provide a review of its activities to the Council for the first time in 2004.

31. In paragraph 48 of resolution 57/270 B, the Assembly invited the functional commissions to consider, in their deliberations, the experience gained and lessons learned by the United Nations funds and programmes in the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits.

32. To that end, the Secretary-General, in his reports to the functional commissions on their methods of work, made several recommendations. For example, the Secretary-General invited the Commission for Social Development to encourage and seek more active participation and involvement in its work by the funds and programmes. The Secretary-General also suggested that the Commission on the Status of Women develop ways and means to encourage increased involvement by the entities of the United Nations system, particularly to enhance its catalytic and monitoring focus on mainstreaming gender perspective. There is certainly scope for greater interaction between the commissions and the executive boards of the funds and programmes.

Recommendation

33. **The Council may wish to request all its subsidiary bodies, including the executive boards, to consider ways to strengthen their substantive linkages with the work of the Council, particularly as it relates to the coordinated implementation of Conference outcomes, and to encourage its functional commissions to enhance their interactions with the funds and programmes.**

2. Building a closer relationship with the specialized agencies and inter-agency bodies

34. To promote a consistent approach on conference goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, a closer link should be built between the governing bodies of United Nations system organizations, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the functional commissions. To that end, thematic linkages could be built into the agendas and work programmes of those bodies. Ensuring that the programmes of the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system effectively support the implementation of conference commitments and the Millennium Development Goals requires a strengthening of inter-agency interaction at not only the inter-secretariat but also the intergovernmental levels.

35. The approach being adopted by the Council to review implementation through cross-cutting themes during the coordination segments of its substantive sessions could also be considered by governing bodies of United Nations system organizations as a means to enhance their policy dialogue with the Council on the integrated and coordinated follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits.

36. More systematic interactions between the Economic and Social Council and the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and its machinery also need to be devised. The policy guidance role of the Council should rely on the support of this machinery.

3. Guiding and using the work of the regional commissions on implementation and follow-up

37. In its resolution 57/270 B, the Assembly invited the regional commissions, in collaboration with other regional and subregional organizations and processes, to contribute, within their existing mandates, to the review of progress in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conference and summits and to provide input to the discussions of the Council on the cross-sectoral thematic issues to be discussed at its substantive session.

38. Earlier, the regional commissions have been given specific mandates from the Council on follow-up to the major global conferences. In its resolution 1998/46, the Council invited the regional commissions to further strengthen their active participation in implementation at the regional level of the results of major United Nations conferences and summits. The Council's guidance took into account (a) the convening power of the regional commissions to bring together different categories of development actors (member States, regional and subregional organizations, NGOs and the business community); (b) their capacity to organize events at which countries can share common concerns and expectations, exchange experience and discuss a wide range of policy issues; (c) their multisectoral nature, placing them in a position for promoting cross-sectoral approaches; and (d) their direct contact with national statistical offices, offering a basis for monitoring progress achieved through comparable data series and indicators.

39. The regional commissions have been increasingly strengthening their role in linking global deliberations with regional implementation measures, while continuing to support subregional and regional integration and consensus-building. Their roles have received recognition at United Nations conferences and summits. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development, in particular, it was emphasized that its outcome documents should be implemented at the regional level as well. The significance of a regional perspective in the future work of the Commission on Sustainable Development was also underlined at the Summit.

40. At its eleventh session, the Commission on Sustainable Development invited the United Nations regional commissions to contribute to its work, notably by organizing regional implementation meetings, in collaboration with its secretariat, other regional and subregional organizations and regional offices of United Nations system organizations. The regional commissions organized meetings prior to the twelfth session of the Commission and regional forums during the session in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat.

41. The Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development (para. 63) also encouraged actions to promote the role of the regional commissions and the regional development banks in supporting policy dialogue among countries at the regional level on macroeconomic, financial, trade and development issues.

42. The potential contribution of regional processes to the integrated follow-up to conferences has yet to be fully exploited. In addition to assessing the achievement of internationally agreed goals at sessions of the commissions, other formats for regional reviews would be feasible, including special events, possibly held back to back with the sessions of the commissions or of their relevant subsidiary

committees. Synergies and cross-fertilization should be maximized between work at the regional and global levels. The commissions could look at selected cross-cutting themes that require more regional coordination and attention and share the experience of regional reporting on the Millennium Development Goals. Integrated and coordinated implementation at the regional level also requires more effective inter-agency cooperation and coordination. The inter-agency regional coordination meetings provide instruments to further cooperation and build partnerships within the United Nations system. In that context, the Economic Commission for Africa continues to work towards greater United Nations coherence as the system's key interlocutor with African countries on the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

43. The regional commissions have strategic advantages for intersectoral and multi-stakeholder dialogues at the regional level. They could further promote regional partnership with both civil society and the private sector, especially in areas where more regional cooperation and attention are required.

Recommendations

44. **The Economic and Social Council may wish to:**

(a) **Stress the role of the regional commissions as a regional focal point for monitoring and assessing the progress made towards the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, bearing in mind regional priorities;**

(b) **Request strengthened coordination between the regional commissions and regional programmes of United Nations entities, the specialized agencies, the Bretton Woods institutions and regional development banks. This should involve the regional coordination meetings established by Council resolution 1998/46;**

(c) **Encourage greater cooperation between the regional commissions and its functional commissions, for example, through convening regional meetings on relevant issues and the adoption of regional plans of action;**

(d) **Request regional commissions to enhance their role in supporting the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including through an integrated approach in their work and relevant processes;**

(e) **Regional commissions should address regional dimension of cross-cutting themes emerging from the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits.**

4. Improving the contribution of non-governmental organizations and the private sector to the work of the Economic and Social Council

45. Institutional stakeholders, advocacy and interest groups, business and other major groups, as well as research and academic institutions, inject dynamism into the intergovernmental process and facilitate informed decision-making. Their presence helps in generating greater awareness of the work of the United Nations. The Monterrey, Johannesburg and other United Nations conferences and summits have been major sources of innovative arrangements to enhance partnership and alliance-building with non-state actors. To ensure effective and broad-based

implementation, non-state actors need to be integrated into the follow-up mechanism working in partnership with Governments and international organizations. The innovative modalities of cooperation established in the preparation of the Johannesburg and Monterrey conferences must be built upon in the implementation phase. In paragraph 21 of its resolution 57/270 B, the Assembly underlined the importance of the contribution of civil society, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to the implementation of the conference outcomes.

46. While respecting the intergovernmental character of the Organization, the deliberative processes of the Council and its functional commissions can facilitate the building of alliances for action around key goals and commitments, modelled along the lines of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization, the Global Fund for HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the Information, Communication Technologies Task Force, and the Public-Private Alliance on Rural Development.

47. A consistent effort must be made by the United Nations system to engage all relevant stakeholders in countries, using to the best the comparative advantage of each. Diverse participation should be encouraged, especially by developing countries, and the involvement of NGOs should be increased, including through regional/national networks.

48. The Secretary-General's Panel of Eminent Persons on Civil Society and United Nations Relationships is in the process of finalizing its findings and recommendations on this whole issue of United Nations and civil society contributions.

D. Strengthening the relationship with financial and trade institutions

1. Building greater coherence, coordination and cooperation through the special high-level meeting of the Council with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization

49. The special high-level meetings with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization have provided a unique forum to promote coherence, coordination and cooperation in the areas of investment, trade, official development assistance, debt, systemic issues and development cooperation. The Monterrey Consensus engaged all institutional stakeholders in the follow-up process. The preparatory activities related to the meeting are also contributing to strengthening institutional linkages and to promote better understanding of different perspectives on the issue of financing for development.

50. The 2004 special high-level meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and — beginning in 2004 — the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) focused on the overall theme "Coherence, coordination and cooperation in the context of the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus". Selection of specific themes, i.e., the impact of private investment and trade-related issues on financing for development, the role of multilateral institutions in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and debt sustainability and debt relief, which resonated with ongoing debate in the trade and

finance institutions and in the Assembly and the Council, helped to link the discussions in various institutions.

51. Another important innovation in 2004 was the participation of the President of the Trade and Development Board of UNCTAD, who was invited in pursuance of General Assembly resolutions 57/270 B and 57/230. It was the first time that the intergovernmental side of UNCTAD was engaged in this meeting.

52. All institutional stakeholders, particularly the intergovernmental bodies of the Bretton Woods institutions, have shown growing interest in this forum, which was evident from the participation of a large number of executive directors at the 26 April 2004 meeting. While the meeting has led to greater dialogue among the institutions, there is a need to ensure that deliberations at this meeting have a concrete impact on the work of those institutions, particularly on issues that are at the intersection of the various chapters of the Monterrey Consensus.

Recommendation

53. **The Council may wish to request the President and the members of the Bureau to explore ways and means of enhancing the impact of the deliberations of the special high-level meeting on the work of the respective institutions.**

2. Improving further the impact of the high-level segment and of the dialogue with heads of financial and trade institutions

54. The high-level segment of the Council plays an important role in providing political impetus for building areas of convergence, supporting and supplementing the policy development role of the General Assembly. The segment aims to address major topical themes related to economic and social policy as well as international cooperation in the economic, social and related fields. The Council has effectively demonstrated its ability to engage high-level policy makers, the United Nations system and other actors. This potential needs to be exploited further. The power to convene should be used to attract ministers and policy makers from various sectors that are equipped to deal with various cross-sectoral issues. It should become an annual forum for reviewing the progress made in the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. While deciding the theme for the high-level segment, the Council may wish to highlight this dimension.

55. The Council's one-day policy dialogue with heads of financial and trade institutions has a distinct role in comparison to its special high-level meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization. The special meeting, as reconstituted after the International Conference on Financing for Development, is the occasion for intergovernmental dialogue, focused on coherence, coordination and cooperation in implementing the broad agenda agreed upon at Monterrey. The one-day policy dialogue is the occasion for the Secretary-General and the heads of UNCTAD, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization to discuss important developments in the world economy and international development cooperation.

56. It thus provides significant opportunity to discuss the impact of the world economic situation on the realization of the goals of sustained economic growth, sustainable development and poverty eradication and how the system can and should

respond to the global economic situation. In the coming years, the dialogue could focus on various dimensions of globalization and how to address the challenges posed by that phenomenon.

Recommendation

57. **The Council may wish to consider focusing its annual high-level policy dialogue on various dimensions of globalization and how to make it work towards the realization of the development goals.**

E. Complying with specific mandates given to the Council

1. World Summit on Sustainable Development

58. The Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation) called for greater involvement of the Council in sustainable development-related work and outlined the role it could play in the follow-up to the Summit. It was agreed that the Council could, inter alia, organize periodic consideration of sustainable development themes in regard to the implementation of Agenda 21, including the means of implementation. Recommendations in regard to such themes could be made by the Commission on Sustainable Development and could make full use of its high-level, coordination, operational activities and general segments in order to effectively take into account all relevant aspects of the work of the United Nations on sustainable development.

59. In its resolution 2003/61 on future programme, organization and methods of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Council decided to organize the periodic consideration of sustainable development themes with regard to the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, including the means of implementation, and invited the Commission to submit recommendations to the Council with regard to such themes.

60. To review the contribution of the United Nations system in the implementation of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the Council could devote one of its coordination segments to a theme related to sustainable development and the follow-up to the Summit.

Recommendation

61. **In pursuance of the mandate given by the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Council may wish to consider devoting one of its segments to the sustainable development related issues, focusing on the role of the system in the follow-up to the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.**

2. International Conference on Financing for Development

62. The Monterrey Consensus encouraged the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization to address issues of coherence, coordination and cooperation as a follow-up to the Conference, at the spring meeting between the Economic and Social Council and the Bretton Woods institutions. The meeting should include an intergovernmental segment to address an

agenda agreed to by the participating organizations, as well as a dialogue with civil society and the private sector.

63. As mandated by the Monterrey Consensus, the special high-level meeting of the Council with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, held on 26 April 2004, focused on the theme of coherence, coordination and cooperation. Following wide-ranging consultations, the Council and other institutional stakeholders also selected specific themes for focused discussions during the six round-table meetings. For the first time, the President of the Trade and Development Board of UNCTAD participated in the meeting.

64. As stipulated by the Monterrey Consensus, informal hearings were held with NGOs and the private sector almost one month prior to the meeting. Not only were summaries of the hearings made available but NGO and private-sector representatives were invited to present their views to the meeting.

65. The level of participation and the active engagement of all the institutions were encouraging but there was a widely shared need for enhancing the impact of this meeting on the steps being taken to implement the Monterrey Consensus. The meeting could be more sharply focused on substantive issues and there could be a follow-up interaction between Council members and relevant entities of the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization.

3. Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

66. The Assembly and the Council were identified in the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the decade 2001-2010 as key United Nations bodies for the review of the implementation of the Programme by the least developed countries and their development partners within the integrated and coordinated follow-up to and the implementation of the United Nations major conferences and summits.

67. In its decision 2001/320, the Council established the sub-item "Review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010" under its regular agenda item entitled "Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the major United Nations conferences and summits".

68. In 2004, two of the four segments of the Council's subsantive session (high-level and coordination segment) will address themes that are related to least developed countries issues. This is part of the Council's efforts to pursue a coherent and comprehensive approach to the review of the implementation of the Programme of Action. All preparatory activities (a series of multistakeholder round tables on resources mobilization and enabling environment for poverty eradication) for the high-level segment held in February and March 2004 were geared to examining the theme of the high-level segment in the context of the Brussels Programme of Action as a means of achieving the Millennium Development Goals in the least developed countries. The Council's special high-level meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization also addressed issues related to least developed countries/low-income countries and promoted linkage between the Programme of Action and the International Conference for Financing for Development.

69. Given that the Programme of Action is a framework for partnerships, the role of civil society, NGOs and private sector in the review of its implementation has been crucial. During both the 2003 general segment and in preparation for the 2004 high-level segment, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and the Council secretariat organized a number of regional events and a global forum with their active involvement.

Recommendation

70. **The Council may wish to consider launching a global alliance of partnership initiatives related to the follow-up to the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries 2001-2010, as this would help in promoting coordinated implementation.**

4. Almaty Programme of Action: addressing the special needs of landlocked developing countries within a new global framework for transit transport cooperation

71. The International Ministerial Conference to address the special needs of landlocked developing countries was held in August 2003 and it adopted the Almaty Programme of Action and Almaty Declaration. The Programme of Action is action-oriented and focused and calls for measurable specific actions in five priority areas: (a) fundamental transit policy issues, (b) infrastructure development, (c) international trade and trade facilitation, (d) international support measures, and (e) implementation and review. Since different United Nations specialized agencies, the regional commissions and other international, regional and professional organizations are specialized in different aspects of establishing efficient transit transport systems, well coordinated and coherent follow-up activities are vital for the effective implementation of the Programme of Action. Pursuant to paragraph 49 of the Programme of Action, the Assembly will conduct a comprehensive review of its implementation in accordance with its resolution 57/270 B. At the same time, the active involvement of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, the regional commissions and other relevant organizations in the implementation of and follow-up to the Programme of Action is called for in the Programme of Action. The review by the Assembly of the implementation of the Programme of Action should therefore be closely linked to and coordinated with the Council and its subsidiary bodies, including the functional commissions.

Recommendation

72. **The Council may wish to request its subsidiary bodies to promote, as relevant, the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.**

F. Contribution of the Council to the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly in 2005

73. In paragraph 75 of its resolution 57/270 B, the Assembly stressed that there was scope for a major event in 2005, possibly a comprehensive review, bearing in mind that it had decided to review in 2005 the progress achieved in implementing all

the commitments made in the Millennium Declaration, on the basis of a comprehensive report of the Secretary-General.

74. In its resolution 58/291, the Assembly decided to convene in 2005, at the commencement of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, a high-level plenary meeting of the Assembly with the participation of heads of State and Government. This major event is expected to undertake a comprehensive review of the progress made (a) in the fulfilment of all the commitments contained in the Millennium Declaration, including the internationally agreed development goals and the global partnership required for their achievement, and (b) in the integrated and coordinated implementation, at the national, regional and international levels, of the outcomes and commitments of the major United Nations conferences and summits in areas related to economic and social issues. The Assembly has requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its fifty-ninth session a report on the suggested modalities, format and organization of this major event for its consideration and final decision, taking into account the open-ended consultations to be carried out by the President of the Assembly.

75. In addition to this review, the Assembly is scheduled to hold in 2005 the biennial high-level dialogue on financing for development. While planning for that high-level plenary, there is a need to ensure that those three elements — the implementation of conference outcomes, follow-up to the Millennium Declaration and the issue of financing for development — are brought together in a flexible yet coherent manner. Decision on the timing of holding the dialogue and the high-level plenary meeting should take into account the need to promote greater engagement among high-level policy makers dealing with various dimensions of development.

76. The Council and its subsidiary machinery can play an important role in the lead to the high-level plenary in 2005. The Council could be asked to contribute to the review of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration by focusing on the progress achieved in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. The subsidiary bodies of the Council, particularly the functional commissions, could also contribute to that exercise by focusing on the various aspects of the development goals that are relevant to their areas of activity.

Recommendations

77. **The Secretary-General has recommended the theme "Achieving the development goals of global conferences, including the Millennium Development Goals — challenges and opportunities" for the 2005 high-level segment of the Council, which the Council may wish to adopt in order to make a substantive contribution to the high-level meeting of the General Assembly.**

78. **The Council may wish to request its functional commissions and other relevant subsidiary bodies to contribute to the high-level segment and other segments of its substantive session of 2004 dealing with the themes related to the high-level plenary of the General Assembly in 2005.**

Notes

[1] In its resolution 58/291, the General Assembly decided to convene, in 2005, a high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly with the participation of heads of State and Government.